

A Survey for Mental Health Clients Regarding Personal Health Records (PHRs) That Includes Both Physical and Mental Health Information

Tired of answering the same questions over and over again when receiving treatment services? Tired of the hassle of transferring health records from provider to provider when you see a specialist or a new treatment provider?

Most service providers keep your clinical records in paper files. Some providers keep them as computer files, which are called electronic health records (EHRs). Either way, each service provider organization keeps their separate records about you. It is sometimes a challenge to get your records quickly and safely transferred from one of your service providers to another so you can get the well-coordinated services you need.

The Personal Health Record (PHR) is one of the proposed solutions being considered for this and other types of needs. **The Personal Health Record or PHR is a secure electronic “place” you could use to gather the most important parts of your health and mental health records.** All the important parts of your health and mental health care information could be in one place—in your PHR, that you own and control, posted on a secure website. The privacy of your PHR would be protected with strict security so you could see it, but no one else could unless you give permission.

PHRs contain sensitive health care information and some people worry that theirs won't be well protected. Some want to have their information available and in their control to share with others, and some don't want to have that responsibility. Although part of the costs of PHR services might be covered by some type of sponsoring organization, it is important to know if consumers and family members will really want to use those services.

Some of the ways you can use your PHR include:

For sharing information and communicating online with your service providers. You could allow your service providers or family members to view only those parts of your record they might need to help you with your treatment. You could also email your service provider through your PHR if you had a few questions to ask. In a health care emergency you could enable the emergency room physician to quickly review parts of your PHR so he/she could immediately provide you with proper care.

For your own private use. You could review parts of your record whenever you want. If you wanted, you could keep a record of your progress in treatment and how you felt about it--what worked for you and what did not. You could enter questions you want to ask your service provider and record their replies.

For sharing with family or close friends. You could use your PHR to share some information about your health or related services with close family or friends who help you.

Some people use PHRs now, and many more are expected to use them soon, so we need to find ways to make them easily available and safe to use. Your responses will assist in determining the guidelines for PHR development. This survey is anonymous and voluntary. Neither your identity nor the services you receive are connected with your responses. **Please take this survey online or send it back to us so we receive it no later than March 15th.**